

REMARKS

Claims 1, 21, and 23 have been amended and new claims 24-31 having been added. The amendments further define the invention. Support for the amendments can be found in the specification and figures, specifically pages 7, line 32 through page 8, line 12 and Figure 3. Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to Claims 1, 21, and 23 by the above amendments and the new claims. The attached page is entitled "Version with markings to show changes made".

Rejection under 35 USC 102

Claims 1-5, 8, 21, and 22 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Srinivasan et al. (5,851,935). Srinivasan et al. discloses a laminated fabric wherein an elastomeric film material is sandwiched between two webs of carded thermoplastic staple fibers. Figure 1(c) shows an aperture that is square in shape and Figure 3(b) shows circular lands that form bond spots. Srinivasan et al. states that the preferred embodiment has an engraved top calendar roll with a repeating 7-point dot pattern of spaced circular lands. (Column 6, lines 62-65) It appears from Figure 1(c) and Figure 3(b) that the aspect ratio of the bond spot would be approximately 1. The present invention, as amended in the Claims, requires that the bond site have an aspect ratio greater than about 3. The aspect ratio is the ratio of the length of the bond site to the width of the bond site. (page 7, lines 17-34) Figure 3 of the present invention details an example of the bond site showing the aspect ratio being greater than about 3. The disclosure in Srinivasan et al. does not anticipate the specific shape of the bond site as required in the amended claims.

Claims 1-5, 8, and 21-23 are rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Kielpikowski et al. Kielpikowski et al. discloses a laminate comprising an elastomeric film or nonwoven carrier sheet sandwiched between a pair of nonwoven facing sheets. The entire laminate web may be apertured. Figure 18 shows that the apertures and bond sites are circular in shape. As stated above, the circular bond site would have an aspect ratio of approximately 1 which is different than the present invention which requires the bond site having an aspect ratio of greater than about 3. Therefore, the disclosure in Kielpikowski et al. does not anticipate the specific shape of the bond site as required in the amended claims.

Rejection under 35 USC 103(a)

Claims 1, 2, 4, and 7 are rejected under 35 USC 103 as being unpatentable over Seward in view of Srinivasan et al. Claim 6 is rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Srinivasan et al. in view of Griesbach et al. and Claim 9 is rejected over Srinivasan et al. in view of Phan et al. Seward discloses a reinforced fabric composition achieved through needle punching, Griesbach et al. discloses a hydroentangled composite, and Phan et al. discloses a superabsorbent polymer foam. None of these references discloses a bond site having an aspect ratio of greater than about 3. By the amendments presented and the remarks above regarding Srinivasan et al., Applicants assert that the amended claims are patentable over Srinivasan et al. in view of Seward, Griesbach et al., and Phan et al.

CONCLUSION

Applicants have made an earnest effort to distinguish the claimed invention from the applied documents and place the Claims in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of this application, in view of the amendments and remarks provided, and allowance of Claims 1-9, 21, and 23-31 are requested. In the event that issues remain prior to allowance of the pending claims, the Examiner is invited to call Applicants' undersigned attorney to discuss any remaining issues.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

1. (Twice Amended) A laminate web comprising:

- (a) a first prebonded web;
- (b) a second prebonded web joined to said first prebonded web in a face to face relationship at a plurality of discrete [thermal] bond sites each having an aspect ratio greater than about 3, the first and second prebonded webs forming an interior region therebetween; and
- (c) a third material being disposed between at least a portion of said first and second prebonded webs, said third material being apertured in regions adjacent said discrete [thermal] bond sites, such that said first and second prebonded webs are joined through said apertures and wherein said third material is adjacent to said discrete [thermal] bond sites and substantially fills said interior region.

21. (Amended) A laminate web comprising:

- (a) a first [prebonded] web;
- (b) a second [prebonded] web joined to said first [prebonded] web in a face to face relationship at a plurality of discrete [thermal] bond sites each having an aspect ratio of greater than about 3, the first and second prebonded webs forming an interior region therebetween; and
- (c) a third material being disposed between at least a portion of said first and second [prebonded] webs, said third material being apertured in regions adjacent said discrete [thermal] bond sites, such that said first and second [prebonded] webs are joined through said apertures [and wherein said third material is part of said discrete thermal bond sites and substantially fills said interior region].

Claim 22 has been deleted.

23. (Amended) An apertured laminate web comprising:

- (a) a first web;

(b) a second web joined to said first web in a face to face relationship at a plurality of discrete [thermal] bond sites each having a longitudinal axis and an aspect ratio greater than about 3, the first and second webs forming an interior region therebetween; and

(c) a third material being disposed between at least a portion of said first and second webs, said third material being apertured in regions adjacent said discrete [thermal] bond sites, such that said first and second webs are joined through said apertures [and wherein said third material is adjacent to said discrete thermal bond sites and substantially fills said interior region];

wherein said first and second webs of said laminate web are apertured at said discrete [thermal] bond sites by extending said laminate web in a direction orthogonal to said longitudinal axis of said discrete [thermal] bond site.

24. (New) The laminate web of Claim 21 wherein said first or second web comprises a nonwoven.

25. (New) The laminate web of Claim 24 wherein said first and second webs are identical.

26. (New) The laminate web of Claim 21 wherein said aspect ratio is from about 4 to about 20.

27. (New) The laminate web of Claim 26 wherein said aspect ratio is about 10.

28. (New) The apertured laminate web of Claim 23 wherein said first or second web comprises a nonwoven.

29. (New) The apertured laminate web of Claim 28 wherein said first and second webs are identical.

30. (New) The apertured laminate web of Claim 23 wherein said aspect ratio is from about 4 to about 20.

31. (New) The apertured laminate web of Claim 30 wherein said aspect ratio is about 10.